



**NORTH BELLMORE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 10, 2022**

Business Meeting	Martin Avenue School 2616 Martin Avenue, Bellmore, NY 11710	7:30 PM
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The Business meeting of the North Bellmore Union Free School District Board of Education was held on Thursday evening, February 10, 2022, in the All Purpose Room of the Martin Avenue School at 2616 Martin Avenue, Bellmore, New York, and via livestream.

The following members of the Board of Education were present:

Rosemarie Corless, President
Jo-Ann Erhard, Vice President
Melissa Cmar-Grote
Nina Lanci
Christine Malloy

Also present:

Marie Testa, Superintendent of Schools
Janet Pollitt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Jacqueline Rehak, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Jason Fischetti, Executive Director of Technology, Data and Information Services
Leyna Malone, Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education
Christopher Powers, District Counsel
Laurice Gunnels, District Clerk

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. Motion was made by Mrs. Erhard at 6:47 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Malloy to move into an executive session. Motion was carried 5-0. The meeting reconvened at 7:37 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Mrs. Corless led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Malloy read the District's Mission Statement.

AMENDMENT OF ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS Mrs. Corless on behalf of the Board requested that Agenda Item No. 17, the second Public Comment session, be moved to after the Superintendent's Report since there were children in attendance to address the Board. She indicated the public session portion of the meeting would be held to 30 minutes affording time for the remainder of the agenda. Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Malloy, and carried 5-0.

- APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Mrs. Cmar-Grove moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Business meeting of January 13, 2022, and the Special Meetings of January 26, January 27, and January 28 of 2022. Mrs. Malloy seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.
- PUBLIC COMMENTS** None.
- CORRESPONDENCE** Mrs. Corless advised that the Board received correspondence and it was discussed in Executive Session.
- Mrs. Cmar-Grote briefly spoke to the public vote that took place regarding the Amicus Brief and the decision to abstain by both she and Mrs. Lanci. Due to the limited timeframe to analyze the brief, the complexity of it, and the time constraints surrounding the emergency meeting on the public vote, she indicated they felt they did not have adequate information to make an informed decision on behalf of the community in which they represent.
- TREASURER'S REPORT** Mrs. Lanci moved that the Board of Education approve the Treasurer's report for the month ended December 31, 2021. Mrs. Erhard seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.
- BOARD COMMITTEE / HIGH SCHOOL REPORTS** Mrs. Lanci reported the high school district met last Wednesday evening. She described the night as bittersweet as the Board honored the retirement of Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Mara Bollettieri, who served BMCHSD for thirteen years. Dr. Bollettieri started the community cupboard seven years ago, and the BOE honored her legacy by renaming the community cupboard to the Dr. Mara Bollettieri Community Cupboard. Mrs. Lanci was excited to announce that two of the Regeneron semi-finalists from JFK were chosen as finalists. Continuing on, she proudly added that several of the student athletes during the snowstorm, being unable to practice or play games, assisted their neighbors by shoveling. Mrs. Lanci indicated in addition to the normal course of business, there was the assignment of new coaches for the spring season. The high school district will be meet again in March.
- FINANCE** The Board of Education acknowledged the review of the warrants that have been approved by the Claims Auditor for the month of January 2022.
- The Superintendent of Schools recommends approval of all resolutions included in 10.1 through 15.2.
- SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** Mrs. Testa started the evening by recognizing Noreen Wagner, a lunch time assistant and long-time employee of North Bellmore. Ms. Wagner recently, she explained, while performing her duties as an LRA in the Martin Avenue School cafeteria noticed a student in distress and performed the Heimlich Maneuver. Fortunately, Ms. Wagner's expedient effort relieved the child's distress and the student moved forward safe and healthy. On behalf of the Board and the District Mrs. Testa expressed her gratitude to Ms. Wagner for her dedication to the children of North Bellmore.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT
(continued)**

Mrs. Testa and the Board then continued with North Bellmore's own bittersweet celebration for Barbara Fillios on her retirement branching twenty years with the District as Kindergarten monitor to District Treasurer. Speeches and words of gratitude and dedication were offered by Mrs. Testa, Mrs. Rehak, and Mrs. Lanci on behalf of the District and Board, from Mrs. Agoglia on behalf of the CSEA Clerical/Cafeteria Unit, and from myself and Mrs. Giovino, as co-workers and friends. Some shared stories while others offered just simply words of sentiment, all describing Mrs. Fillios' loyalty, dependability, and inspiration to her family and friends, her community, her job, and her co-workers. As a final statement, Mrs. Fillios received a standing ovation in a congratulatory celebration on her retirement and success.

Mrs. Testa continued on by thanking and expressing her appreciation to all in attendance, especially the children, for standing and applauding in celebration of Mrs. Fillios. Moving on, she drew the attention of the audience to the slide-show on the wall illustrating photos of classrooms and students, and expressed her gratitude to Mr. Fischetti on behalf of the Board for orchestrating this presentation for the parents and community.

Mrs. Testa was excited to inform the Board and community that reconfiguration of the classrooms back to dyad and triad formations began today. Mrs. Testa reiterated the District's awareness of the importance of small group instruction and as was indicated at the last Board meeting, once deemed safe to do so, would readopt this setting. She expressed her gratitude to the teachers, faculty, and staff for their creativity in the interim to maintain small groups instruction until this was deemed feasible again.

Mrs. Testa updated the Board on Districtwide events that occurred this month:

- There were celebrations in the buildings regarding Black History Month, World Read Aloud Day, and Chinese New Year.
- The students participated in *Valentines for Vets* in honor of the veterans who served our Country.
- The Newbridge Road 2nd Grade Students were featured in the Bellmore Herald regarding exploring the natural earth as part of their social studies/geography curriculum.

With respect to curriculum, Mrs. Testa was happy to announce the 5th and 6th Grade Language Program will return in the 2022-2023 school year and is of part of the projected budget. Students will receive Spanish instruction in person as it was prior to the pandemic. In addition to Spanish, Mrs. Testa expressed her gratitude to Mrs. Pollitt for exploring virtual and in-person opportunities for those interested in other languages, i.e., Italian, French, and Mandarin.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT
(continued)**

Turning to Human Resources/Personnel, Mrs. Testa expressed her gratitude to Mrs. Fisher for her continued due diligence and provided the following updates to the Board:

- The District has recently partnered with School Front, a step toward digitalizing Human Resources, i.e., personnel files, employee recruitment, district forms, etc.
- Addressing the District's staffing shortage, utilization of online forums such as Indeed for recruitment of substitute teachers, substitute secretaries, and paraprofessionals has increased the number of potential applicants.

Mrs. Testa expressed gratitude to the Board for apprising the District of a public hearing on a change of zoning with respect to the Beth-El temple located on Bellmore Road for the potential construction of a new 28-unit multi-family apartment building. The meeting will be held on February 15, at 10:30 a.m., in the Hempstead Town Hall. As this could directly impact enrollment among other issues in the District, Mrs. Testa, Mrs. Rehak, and Mr. Fischetti, will be attending this meeting to represent the Board and the community of North Bellmore.

In conclusion of her report, Mrs. Testa spoke briefly to the decline in COVID cases in the schools, the distribution of further test kits, and the mask mandate for schools at the current time. She did stress that the District is waiting until after mid-winter break for further related updates.

PERSONNEL REPORT

Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci to approve the Personnel Report dated February 10, 2022. Mrs. Cmar-Grove seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

- A. Appointments
- B. Leave Requests
- C. Resignation
- D. Termination

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Findlay, a parent of the Saw Mill community, addressed the Board regarding the impact the last three years has had on the children referencing the mask mandate, quarantines, the loss of socialization, remote learning, etc. Ms. Finley expressed that tonight is not about the pros or the cons and/or the legalities but rather for the children who are here tonight so their voices can be heard. A number of students and recent graduates of the Saw Mill Road community addressed the Board individually. The children shared in their words frustration over having to wear masks, having headaches, being unable to breathe, masks hurting their faces, the inability to understand when their teachers or friends are speaking, and some even expressed the sadness of not being able to see a smile on faces.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
(continued)

Ms. Ciancerelli (Mona Court) –Ms. Ciancerelli then addressed the Board thanking them for allowing the children to speak and rearranging the agenda so it could be done earlier in the meeting. She detailed for the Board what the children have been missing, i.e. working and playing on the carpet, mystery reader, class parties, friends, the overall socialization that bonds, and academically experiencing learning and speech loss. Ms. Ciancerelli expressed the desire to have parental choice with regard to masks for their children.

Mrs. Corless on behalf of the Board expressed her gratitude to all of the children and families who came out this evening to speak to them and stressed those feelings were heard. Mrs. Testa reiterated Mrs. Corless' sentiments to the families present this evening and, to the children, she commended them on their bravery to speak their feelings, emphasized the importance of their voices, and applauded them.

Ms. Margaronis (Arthur Lane) – *Could you please tell us who is up for re-election this year?* Mrs. Corless responded that it is both she and Mrs. Erhard.

Ms. Margaronis (Arthur Lane) - *The Public Health & Planning Council updated their rules and regulations today. Could you please speak on what is meant by taking steps to reduce morbidity and mortality that the local health authority determine to be appropriate.* Mrs. Corless responded that the Board is not aware of what she's speaking of and indicated the Public Health & Planning Council does not give them rules and regulations. Mrs. Testa further expressed that this is not their purview, New York State is. Ms. Margaronis further went on to ask the question if the FDA approves the vaccine for eighteen and under, will a mandate be brought into schools and, if so, what would that look like. Mrs. Testa responded we have not received anything, and if a mandate were to come down, she did explain that they would have to review and interpret it with Counsel.

Mr. Opland (N Jerusalem Road) – *Many parents of Dinkelmeyer feel that the playgrounds of the JGD School are not on par with playgrounds at other schools in the District and we would like to revamp the playground. How should we go about it?* Mrs. Testa responded in terms of playground apparatuses it's a process that involves multiple avenues such as fundraising and donations, and/or planning in partnership with the District and the BOE through budgeting. With respect to the blacktop and the condition of it, Mrs. Testa did say you will be hearing more on this at the Budget meeting with respect to Capital projects.

Mrs. Lanci inquired about discretionary money from the state and/or grants that can be applied for in respect to the playground. Mrs. Rehak responded that the District can definitely look into grant funds, but it is a budgetary process that could take a substantial period of time for approval. She explained the District currently has a grant that was applied for two years ago and those projects are still sitting awaiting approval of funds.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS
(continued)**

Ms. Rolston (Walnut Avenue) – *Will younger grades be allowed to go on school trips this year? We are thankful that the sixth graders have been able to go on trips this school year. Other elementary schools have scheduled trips for younger grades (especially outdoor trips). Thank you again for all that you do for our kids!* Mrs. Testa responded that this currently is being discussed in our Team Leadership and Cabinet meetings that occur weekly and the District is working in conjunction with the Principals and teachers discussing facilities that meet the safety regulations for the children at this time and the transportation aspect involved. Mrs. Testa also shared discussions relating to end of the year gatherings outside and other activities in furtherance of the District's steps in returning to normalcy.

Ms. Calderone (Stevens Avenue) – Ms. Calderone began by thanking the Board for allowing enrichment programs back for the children and expressed it has meant the world to the kids as well as the parents. She then inquired when it would be possible for the parents to come back into the buildings to view these performances. Mrs. Testa thanked Ms. Calderone and indicated she would work in partnership with the principals on an event-by-event basis, i.e., the type of event, the number of students involved, and physical space availability. She informed Ms. Calderone that she and/or other interested parents should reach out to their building Principals with respect to the particular performances in question.

Ms. Pascalli (Briggs Street) – *Re. Masks and Amicus brief.* Ms. Pascalli started by saying thank you to the Board for sending the letter to Governor Hochul as well as calling the emergency meeting with regard to the Amicus Brief. Ms. Pascalli spoke to the emergency meeting regarding the abstained votes and the board attendance. Mrs. Testa reiterated what was said earlier in the meeting by Ms. Cmar-Grote and, with regard to attendance, she explained a quorum of members need to be present to hold a meeting. Due to the timing surrounding the request for the emergency meeting, Mrs. Testa explained though all desired to be present, certain job responsibilities would not allow participation. Ms. Pascalli reiterated the desire for parental choice with respect to masking and raised the concern of a possible vaccine mandate.

Ms. Carroll (Regina Avenue) – *Why has the BOE asked for more guidance rather than parent choice as 74 percent of the parents reported in 2021 summer survey they support parent choice regardless of personal opinion.* Mrs. Testa in response did say that parents have requested a new survey. She explained that the District is almost equally divided on this issue and the Board represents the entire District. Mrs. Testa indicated with respect to the individual schools within the District most are equally divided with the exception of Saw Mill, and reiterated that the Board represents a hundred percent of the students and families in all the schools. In furtherance, Mrs. Testa solemnly expressed that the Board recognizes, respects, and acknowledges how passionately parents feel about the issues, they are listening to their opinions, and expressed their desire to do the best they can for the whole community they represent on these issues.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
(continued)

Mrs. Corless indicated unfortunately the board meeting had to move on to other agenda items as they had already surpassed the time limit. She thanked everyone for their questions and any remaining questions would be answered privately.

BUSINESS REPORT

Mrs. Rehak opened with updates for the Board with regard to the 2022-2023 budget.

- The estimated budgetary increase this year is 3.4 percent as compared to 2.6 percent last year. The increase she explained is due to the rising costs of health insurance and transportation.
- The annual budget workshop is scheduled for March 3, at 7 p.m., at Martin Avenue and it will be livestreamed. The link will be on the website and sent via Connect Ed the week of the event.
- The budget calendar is available on the District website under the “Business Department” section.

Mrs. Rehak continued on with the state aid projections and shared with the District the Governor’s budget proposal. As this is only an executive proposal, she indicated changes can still be made until it is enacted by the State Legislature.

- The District’s aid is expected to increase by an estimated 3.1 percent or approximately \$493,000. Mrs. Rehak stressed since State aid is expense driven, this is only an estimation.
- There is a provision to phase in Foundation Aid for districts not yet receiving their total foundation aid. The percentage by district is formula driven and it is in correlation to the amount received by those districts in prior years. North Bellmore will receive a 9 percent increase.

In closing, Mrs. Rehak provided an update on Kindergarten enrollment for 2022-2023. She indicated based on a total of 166 registered children and the number of upcoming appointments scheduled, the total potential enrollment as of the end of February will be 203 students raising the estimated projected enrollment to 262 students if all pre-registered families come in. Mrs. Rehak indicated that while this is slightly higher than last month, it is still less than last year’s total enrollment of 289. Enrollment will continue to be monitored and, if necessary, the proposed budget will be adjusted accordingly.

**CURRICULUM &
INSTRUCTION REPORT**

Mrs. Pollitt began her report with an update on the Social Studies curriculum. She indicated after diligent research, she and Ms. McNamara has narrowed the search to four possible options. Mrs. Pollitt indicated a Social Studies committee is currently being formed comprising of teachers and/or principals of various buildings and grade levels to further review these options. Demonstrations will be held on March 9th and March 23rd, two vendors on each date, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

**CURRICULUM &
INSTRUCTION REPORT
(continued)**

Moving on, Mrs. Pollitt provided the following updates to the Board:

- State Assessments are scheduled to begin at the end of March. To properly plan for all students, both testing and non-testing, the Principals will be sending a link through digital forum for parents to communicate if their child will not be participating.
- With respect to Professional Development, administrators and teachers shared in a Literacy PD, Beginning Reading Instruction, by Jane Burkins and Kari Yates, Mrs. Pollitt, Dr. Williams, and Mr. O'Brien participated in an I-Ready Data report training, and the Administrators attended an RTI Workshop, Building a Classroom Data Collection Toolkit, that aligns with the multi-tier systems of support and response intervention work occurring in the District.
- The Curriculum Department in conjunction with the Special Education Department have been researching Tier II and Tier III programs for the students and Mrs. Malone will expand on this in her report.
- With regard to the learning loss grant funds, Mrs. Pollitt indicated Ms. McNamara and herself have been researching enrichment programs for the spring such as Scope. Mrs. Pollitt indicated she will be meeting this week in furtherance of this.
- Ms. McNamara will be meeting with the PD Committee to review and obtain feedback on the PD over this past year, and to plan for the upcoming spring Superintendent's Conference Day in May.

Lastly, Mrs. Pollitt reminded all of the upcoming Parent Workshop, *Compassion Fatigue for Parents: Managing Burnout for COVID-19*, to be held on Thursday, February 17. She indicated there is still time to register and that link was sent out via e-mail again today.

Mrs. Malloy questioned Mrs. Pollitt regarding the health and wellness program and inquired if the program could be further developed into a more interactive program by incorporating activities. Mrs. Pollitt explained this is a grant funded program and the lessons are structured to meet those requirements in areas of self-care, acceptance, communications skills, self-esteem building, etc., and the District is looking at options to further embellish and enhance the program with other coping mechanism activities such as yoga, etc., while maintaining those standards.

TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Mr. Fischetti began his report by discussing the 2022-2023 technology plan for the District and indicated the State requires school districts format their goals on a three-year plan basis. This plan he explained sets goals and illustrates the District's points of focus. Mr. Fischetti indicated this plan is due by the end of the year and more on it will follow in the upcoming months.

**TECHNOLOGY REPORT
(continued)**

Over the past three years, with respect to the existing plan and the continued support of the Board, Mr. Fischetti was proud to say that the one-to-one I-Pad initiative was reached for every student K through 6 (with the final four classes getting them this week). He detailed how the I-Pads has revolutionized learning, a long-time vision of the North Bellmore District for students of all ages and levels by enhancing instruction, classroom activity, and increasing student's focus on learning. The new plan he explained will build on this and illustrate goals envisioned for technology over the next three years for the District.

In closing, Mr. Fischetti spoke to the District's migration to cloud based e-mail. He explained with the increased enhanced reliance on e-mail, the cloud's security features far exceeds maintaining e-mail on the premises especially with the spam and virus protection, the accessibility on multiple devices, and limiting e-mail issues due to complications such as power outages. Mr. Fischetti indicated the switchover process is time consuming, will be done in groups, and for those directly impacted it will be performed at night and/or in the summer.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
REPORT**

Mrs. Malone opened her report by reiterating Mrs. Testa's sentiments regarding the quick actions of Ms. Wagner, an LRA, coming to the aid of a child in distress and performing safely the Heimlich Maneuver. Mrs. Malone shared that Ms. Wagner was trained in this technique through the District, and it will be offered again this spring at the Superintendent's Conference Day in May. In the interim, Ms. Ferreri, one of Saw Mill's registered nurses, will be administering training this week for all LRA's in all North Bellmore buildings on the Heimlich Maneuver.

In furtherance of Mrs. Pollitt's report, Mrs. Malone addressed remedial reading, MTSS, and support services offered for the students through the RTI process. She spoke of concerns of faculty, staff, and parents regarding programs currently being utilized possibly not addressing all issues related to comprehension and higher order thinking especially among students in the 12:1:1 class setting. Mrs. Malone was happy to share that the North Bellmore reading teachers through the partnership of the Curriculum and Special Education Departments will be attending a training next week focused on visualizing and verbalization through the Lindamood Bell program which targets comprehension, higher order thinking, and other skill sets.

Moving on, Mrs. Malone continued with these updates:

- The annual review meetings have begun. The Special Education staff is analyzing the projected needs for the ESY Program this summer and the 2022-2023 school year, and adjusting the budget to meet all classroom and service staffing requirements.
- Dr. Lindsay Rich, Martin Avenue School Psychologist, and Mrs. Malone presented at the SEPTA this past Monday evening, *Demystifying the IEP*, focusing on reviewing and detailing the sections of the IEP, and highlighting the importance of parental partnership at CSE's through input and feedback.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
REPORT
(continued)**

And in closing, Mrs. Malone addressed National School Counselor Week. On behalf of herself and Mrs. Pollitt, she extended their gratitude and appreciation to the District School Counselors, Ms. Victoria D’Orio, and Ms. Keira McNamara, on their work with the North Bellmore students in terms of encouragement, guidance, and support especially now, currently, with the sixth-grade classes moving onto Middle School.

Mrs. Malloy raised the question with regard to CSE meetings, has there been any discussion with respect to moving those meetings back in person. Mrs. Malone responded that the difficulty lies with the number of daily meetings, the size and availability of space taking into consideration social distancing guidelines, and the number of participants. She did indicate that teleconferencing is another option for those parents who do not wish to zoom.

Mrs. Erhard, staying in line with the Heimlich training, inquired of those trained in the District with respect to the AED and/or CPR. Mrs. Malone indicated that the Principals, Central Administrators, nurses, and gym teachers are trained. In furtherance, Mrs. Testa indicated that by regulation only gym teachers and nurses have to be trained, but North Bellmore goes beyond that and she shared as part of Superintendent Conference days a certified AED/CPR Training is offered.

CPSE/CSE REPORTS

Mrs. Cmar-Grove moved that the Board of Education approve the CPSE and CSE reports dated February 3, 2022. Mrs. Malloy seconded and the motion was carried 5-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Mrs. Lanci, seconded by Mrs. Cmar-Grove , and carried 5-0 for the following consent agenda items: 15.1-15.2.

**CALENDAR FOR SCHOOL
YEAR 2022/2023**

15.1 **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approve the calendar for 2022/2023 school year.

NEW BUSINESS CONTRACTS

15.2 **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approve the following contracts for the 2021-22 school year:

- Herricks UFSD (2019-20)
- Herricks UFSD (2020-21)
- Long Island Optometric Vision Development
- North Coast Psychological Services, PLLC

OLD BUSINESS

None.

**POTENTIAL EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Motion was made to return into Executive Session by Mrs. Cmar-Grove at 9:47 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Malloy. Motion was carried 5-0. The meeting reconvened at 10:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. Erhard, seconded by Mrs. Lanci, and carried 5-0, the Board of Education meeting was adjourned at 10:47 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 10, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurice Gunnels
District Clerk